



County of Fresno

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PLANNING
STEVEN E. WHITE, DIRECTOR

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

APPLICANT: Baker Commodities, Inc.

APPLICATION NOS.: Initial Study Application No. 7808 and Classified Conditional Use Permit Application No. 3670

DESCRIPTION: Allow a cooker, condenser and a hopper within the proposed 870 square-foot expansion to an existing building, temporary storage of meat and bone meal, and increase in the raw material processing throughput rates at an existing animal rendering facility on a 39.10-acre parcel in the AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District.

LOCATION: The project site is located on the southeast corner of Jensen and Lassen Avenues approximately one mile west of the nearest city limits of the City of Kerman (16801 W. Jensen Ave., Kerman) (SUP. DIST.: 1) (APN No. 020-042-03S).

I. AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

- A. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista; or
- B. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is improved with buildings and structures for an existing animal rendering facility and is surrounded by agricultural land with sparse single-family residence. The project site fronts on Jensen Avenue which is not designated as a scenic drive in the County General Plan and there exists no scenic vistas or scenic resources including trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings on or near the site which may be impacted by the project. The project will have no impact on scenic resources.

- C. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized

area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The subject proposal entails a 870 square-foot addition to an existing 20,500 square feet processing building to accommodate a cooker, condenser and a hopper at an existing animal rendering facility. The proposed addition includes walls and a roof which will match in height, design and finish with the existing building. As such, the project's visual impact on the surrounding area would be less than significant.

- D. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION
INCORPORATED:

The building extension will include outdoor lighting to illuminate the exterior work area. To address any potential impacts resulting from new sources of outdoor lighting, the project will be subject to the following Mitigation Measure.

* **Mitigation Measure**

1. *All outdoor lighting shall be hooded and directed downward so as to not shine toward adjacent properties and public streets.*

II. AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

- A. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use; or
- B. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project is not in conflict with agricultural zoning and is an allowed use on land designated for agriculture with discretionary approval and adherence to the applicable

General Plan Policies. The subject parcel is classified as Unique Farmland, Semi-Agricultural and Rural Commercial Land, and Rural Residential Land in the 2016 Fresno County Important Farmland Map and is not enrolled in a Williamson Act Program. All existing and the proposed improvements are located on the area of the property designated as Semi-Agricultural and Rural Commercial Land, and Rural Residential Land. The project will have no impact, either individually or collectively, on farmland.

- C. Conflict with existing zoning for forest land, timberland or timberland zoned Timberland Production; or
- D. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or
- E. Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forestland to non-forest use?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project is not in conflict with the existing AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size) zoning on the property. The project site is not an active forest land and is in an agricultural area. The project is appropriately allowed for an agricultural zone and upon development will not bring any significant physical changes to the area.

The Fresno County Agricultural Commissioner's Office reviewed the proposal and expressed no concerns with the project.

III. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

- A. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable Air Quality Plan?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The Applicant provided an Air Quality, Public Health and Greenhouse Gas Assessment, completed for the project by Montrose Environmental, dated March 2020. The Assessment with project information was provided to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) for comments. No concerns were expressed by that agency.

The construction and operations of the project would contribute the following criteria pollutant emissions: reactive organic gases (ROG), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). Criteria and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2016.3.2 [California Air Pollution Control Officers

Association (CAPCOA) 2017], which is the most current version of the model approved for use by SJVAPCD.

Per the Air Quality, Public Health and Greenhouse Gas Assessment, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) CEQA guidelines include a criteria pollutant significance threshold of 100 pounds per day per pollutant for permitted activities.

For the subject proposal, the increase in potential emissions of all criteria pollutants (difference between historic peak daily operations which includes emission from cooker boiler and historic meat loading and post project with three existing and one proposed cooker operating at full capacity over a 24-hour period) is 60.6 pounds/day for NO_x, 83.7 pound/day for CO, 5 pound/day for ROG, 25.6 pound/day for SO_x and 20 pound/day for PM₁₀/PM_{2.5}. which is below the SJVAPC daily increase threshold of 100 pounds per day. Similarly, according to SJVAPCD, the annual threshold for determining a project's significance is between 10 and 100 tons, depending upon the pollutant. The net increase in emissions for all criteria pollutants resulting from the subject proposal is 7.9 tons/year for NO_x, 9.8 tons/year for CO, 0.8 tons/year for ROG, 3.5 tons/year for SO_x, and 2.1 tons/year for PM₁₀/PM_{2.5} which is below the SJVAPCD daily increase threshold of 10 to 100 tons per day.

Regarding increase in Daily Facility Emissions attributed to truck traffic (pounds per day) resulting from the subject proposal is 10.5 pound/day for NO_x, 2 pound/day for CO, 0.39 pound/day for ROG, 0.1 pound/day for SO_x, and 1.18 pound/day for PM₁₀/PM_{2.5} which is below the SJVAPCD daily increase threshold of 100 pounds per day.

Regarding an increase in Annual Construction Emissions (tons per year) resulting from the subject proposal, is less than 0.1 tons per year for NO_x, CO, ROG, SO_x and PM₁₀/PM_{2.5} which is below the SJVAPC annual increase threshold of 10 to 100 tons per year.

Based on the above discussion, the total project operation emissions would not exceed the significant criteria for annual ROG, NO_x, CO, SO_x, PM₁₀, or PM_{2.5} emissions. The project would have a less than significant effect on regional air quality.

- B. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The project area is located within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB), which is included among the eight counties that comprise the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. Under the provisions of the U.S. Clean Air Act, the attainment status of SJVAB with respect to national and state ambient air quality standards has been classified as non-attainment/extreme, non-attainment/severe, non-attainment, attainment/unclassified, or attainment for various criteria pollutants which includes O₃, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, CO, NO₂, SO₂, lead and others.

Per the Air Quality, Public Health and Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment, the project does not pose a substantial increase to basin emissions. The project would generate less than significant project-related construction and operational impacts (cookers operation, truck traffic) to criteria air pollutants, and therefore would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the region is a nonattainment under applicable federal or state Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS).

C. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The nearest sensitive receptor (single-family homes) are located approximately 733 feet north and 380 feet northeast from the project boundary.

Health impacts for the facility can be attributed to combustion sources, rendering vapor incineration, and meat meal loading operations. Mobile sources such as material handling equipment (dozers/loaders) and heavy-duty truck exhaust, along with, fugitive road dust can also contain hazardous air pollutants that can cause health risks.

Per the Air Quality, Public Health and Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment, an air dispersion model was conducted using air dispersion model (BREEZE / AERMOD) and the ARB Hotspots Analysis Reporting Program Version 2 (HARP2) to assess the cumulative health impacts attributed to all emission sources at the facility, including onsite and nearby heavy-duty truck and heavy equipment operations.

Toxic Air Contaminants (TAC) emissions associated with construction activity are not expected to have health significant impacts relative to cancer and non-cancer chronic risks because these risks typically occur over continuous exposure for eight to 30 year. Additionally, the impacts of earth moving activity will well within the fence line of the facility and typical wind patterns would carry emissions away from nearby receptors. Therefore, the TAC emission impacts from earth moving activity would be less than significant.

Cancer risks resulting from the project were estimated based on 30-year continuous exposure duration for residential and sensitive receptors and a 25-year, 5 day per week, and 8 hours per day exposure duration for worker receptors. Based upon SJVAPCD Policy APR 1905, a cumulative MICR (maximum individual cancer risk) increase less than 20 in a million is less than significant when Best Available Control Technology for Toxics (T-BACT) is used. For the subject proposal, the boilers are considered to be T-BACT due to their use of natural Gas. The vapor emission control systems also meet T-BACT by reducing over 95% of organic compounds.

Per the Air Quality, Public Health and Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment, cumulative health risk assessment using HARP2 ADMRT module results for Resident /sensitive and off-site worker receptors show that the Maximum Individual Cancer Risk (MICR), Chronic Hazard Index (HI), and Acute Hazard Index (HI) of residential and offsite worker receptors based upon cumulative Hazardous Air Pollutant (HAP) emissions from the

facility are less than threshold of significance. As such, the project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial concentration of TACs.

- D. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION
INCORPORATED:

The project is in an area that is primarily dedicated to agriculture land use. The closest sensitive receptor is located to the northeast (generally upwind) of the facility approximately one-quarter mile from the primary facility operations.

Per the Air Quality, Public Health and Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment, three components of facility operations have the potential emit compounds that may result in odors. The first component is the cooking operation. To reduce the risk of odors, this operation is vented to the recuperative thermal oxidizer to incinerate odor-causing vapors and has been demonstrated to have a high collection and destruction efficiency. The second component of facility operations that can lead to odors is the receiving slab. To reduce the risk of odors, the facility will minimize the amount of time during which unprocessed materials remain on the slab, especially during hot weather when higher throughput volumes are experienced. The third component of the facility operations deals with raw material throughput. The future potential maximum throughput by the facility will increase from 695 tons per day and 165,564 tons per year to new limits of 920 tons per day and 220,000 tons per year though still less than previously assumed maximum raw material throughput of 960 tons per day and 252,500 tons per year. This change amounts to net 32 percent increase in the proposed maximum daily and annual throughput verses increased cooker capacity of 33 percent resulting from the installation of fourth cooker. The cooker will improve operating efficiency and reduce the amount of time that unprocessed feedstock remains at the receiving slab and will also allow the facility operations down as needed to improve preventative maintenance practices for all equipment at the facility, including the vapor collection and odor control systems. In consideration of the efficiencies that are expected to be achieved by adding a fourth cooker, SJVAPCD requires that the facility reduce the maximum allowable processing turnaround from 24 hours to 18 hours and has modified the facility operating permit to ensure enforcement of an 18-hour process turnaround period.

An Odor Management Plan was prepared for the project by Montrose Environmental, dated October 2020 and approved by SJVAPCD as an enforcement agency. The Plan includes several odor mitigation requirements to help reduce nuisance odor relating to raw material receiving operation, meal and bone meal cooking operation, meat and bone meal storage and loadout system and facility wide general maintenance and housekeeping requirements. The project will adhere to the following mitigation measure.

* **Mitigation Measure**

The project shall adhere to the Odor Management Plan prepared by Montrose Environmental dated October 2020 and approved by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- A. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; or
- B. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; or
- C. Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site has several buildings and structures, including lagoons that are being used by an existing animal rendering facility on the property. The subject proposal involving a 870 square feet extension of an existing building on a pre-disturbed land would bring limited physical changes to the site. The neighboring parcels have also been pre-disturbed with farming operations and as such do not provide habitat for state or federally listed species. Additionally, the site does not contain any riparian features or wetlands or waters under the jurisdiction of the United States.

The project was routed to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for comments. Neither agency expressed any concerns with the project.

- D. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

No wildlife or fish movement features (e.g., waterways, arroyos, ridgelines) or any wildlife nursery sites are present on or near the project site that may be impacted by the subject proposal.

- E. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site contains no trees and therefore is not subject to the County tree preservation policy or ordinance.

- F. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state Habitat Conservation Plan?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is located within the Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) Habitat Conservation Plan, which specifically applies to PG&E facilities and not the subject proposal.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- A. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5; or
- B. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5; or
- C. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is not in an area determined to be highly or moderately sensitive to archeological resources. The Native Americans Heritage Commission conducted a Sacred Lands Search for the project site and reported negative results in its search for any sacred sites. The project will not impact archeological resources.

VI. ENERGY

Would the project:

- A. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation; or
- B. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION
INCORPORATED:

The project is unlikely to result in potentially significant environmental impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. To minimize the potential for wasteful or inefficient consumption of energy resources, the project will adhere to the following Mitigation Measure.

* **Mitigation Measure**

1. *The idling of on-site vehicles and equipment will be avoided to the most extent possible to avoid wasteful or inefficient energy consumption during project construction.*

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

- A. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

1. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault?
2. Strong seismic ground shaking?
3. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Per Figure 9-5 of the Fresno County General Plan Background Report relating to probabilistic seismic hazards, the project site is within an area of peak horizontal ground acceleration of 0 to 20 percent. Any impact resulting from seismic activity would be less than significant.

4. Landslides?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Per Figure 9-6 of the Fresno County General Plan Background Report, the project site is not in any identified landslide hazard area.

- B. Result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Some soil erosion or loss of topsoil may result due to the site grading to accommodate the proposed building expansion. However, the impact would be less than significant with a Project Note requiring approval of an Engineered Grading and Drainage Plan and a grading permit/voucher for any grading proposed with this application.

- C. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Per Figure 9-6 of Fresno County General Plan Background Report, the project site is not in an area at risk of landslides. Also, the project involves no underground materials movement and therefore poses no risks related to subsidence.

- D. Be located on expansive soil as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Per Figure 7-1 of the Fresno County General Plan Background Report, the project site is not located in an area where the soils exhibit moderately high to high expansion potential. However, the project development will implement all applicable requirements of the most recent California Building Standards Code and will consider any potential hazards associated with shrinking and swelling of expansive soils.

- E. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project requires no new restroom facility for which an onsite wastewater disposal system may be required.

- F. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

See discussion in Section V. CULTURAL RESOURCES above.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

- A. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Human activities, including fossil fuel combustion and land-use changes, release carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other compounds cumulatively termed greenhouse gases (GHGs). GHGs are effective at trapping radiation that would otherwise escape the atmosphere.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD), a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Trustee Agency for this project, has developed thresholds to determine significance of a proposed project – either implement Best Performance Standards or achieve a 29 percent reduction from Business as Usual (BAU) (a specific numerical threshold). On December 17, 2009, SJVAPCD adopted *Guidance for Valley Land-Use Agencies in Addressing GHG Emission Impacts for New Projects under CEQA* (SJVAPCD 2009), which outlined SJVAPCD's methodology for assessing a project's significance for GHGs under CEQA.

In the Air Quality, Public Health and Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment prepared for the project by Montrose Environmental and dated March 2020, GHG emissions were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2016.3.2 [California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) 2017], which is the most current version of the model approved for use by SJVAPCD.

Greenhouse gas emissions from the rendering process (converting animal deadstock and other animal waste into useable commodities) include combustion emissions from the use of natural gas to fuel boilers that provide heat to operate the cookers. Boiler combustion emissions contribute most greenhouse gas emissions that are attributed to rendering operations. Vapors from the material handling and cooking process are captured and incinerated to destroy organic compounds that may cause odors. The incineration process relies upon the combustion of fuel which also generates greenhouse gas emissions. Finally, the transportation of feedstock from farms and ranches to the facility, and the transportation of finished commodities to end-users also contributes to greenhouse gas emissions.

Per the Air Quality, Public Health and Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment, several alterations made to the existing rendering facility has resulted in reduced greenhouse gas emissions. The boilers and vapor incinerator which were previously permitted to burn yellow grease producing an emission of CO₂ at a rate of 71.06 kg per MMBtu has been replaced to burn natural gas producing a CO₂ emission rate of 53.6 kg/MMBtu. Additionally, rendering vapors have historically been incinerated in a 10 MMBtu/hr. thermal oxidizer. The recently installed new recuperative thermal oxidizer (RTO) effectively incinerates the rendering vapors with a burner rated at only 1.5 MMBtu/hr. Furthermore, both boilers at the facility meet SJVAPCD requirements and one of them has been replaced by a new 23 percent smaller and more efficient boiler which provides improved efficiencies and GHG reductions. All these improvements have contributed to reduced on-site greenhouse gas emissions.

Per the Air Quality, Public Health and Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment, SJVAPCD considers projects covered by California Code of Regulations (CCR) 17, Division 3, Subchapter 10, Article 5 (CA Cap and Trade Program) to be less than significant and excluded from additional analysis. SJVAPCD also considers facilities for which greenhouse gas emissions come primarily from combustion sources that are covered under the Cap and Trade program, to also have greenhouse gas impacts that are less than significant. The facility is not directly cornered by CCR 17, Div. 3, Subchapter 10, but with the transition from yellow grease to 100 percent natural gas for facility boilers and emission control system, and the use of on-road diesel fuel in its mobile sources, all

fuels associated with facility operations are covered under the Cap and Trade Program. As such, project impacts would be considered by SJVAPCD to be less than significant. SJVAPCD also determines project significance based upon the application of best performance standards (BPS) to minimize increases in GHG emissions. A project is deemed to have less than significant impacts when BPS are applied. All three sources of greenhouse gas emissions at the facility (RTO and two boilers) utilize BPS:

As discussed above, based on the SJVAPCD recommended methodology, GHG emissions resulting from facility operations would be less than significant based on compliance with the Cap and Trade Program and use of BPS.

- B. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

As noted above, all fuels associated with facility operations such as the transition from yellow grease to 100 percent natural gas for its boilers and emission control system and the use of on-road diesel fuel in its mobile sources, are covered under the Cap and Trade Program. The project will comply with any additional regulations adopted by the federal, state or local governments to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions that would apply to the facility.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

- A. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials; or
- B. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment; or
- C. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Per the Fresno County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division review of the proposal within 30 days of the occurrence of any of the following events the applicant/operators shall update their online Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) and site map: 1) there is a 100 percent or more increase in the quantities of a previously-disclosed material; 2) the facility begins handling a previously-undisclosed material at or above the HMBP threshold

amounts. Additionally, all hazardous waste shall be handled in accordance with requirements set forth in the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 22, Division 4.5, and if any underground storage tank is found during construction, an Underground Storage Tank Removal Permit shall be obtained to remove the tank.

The project site is located approximately 2.3 miles southwest of Floyd Kerman Elementary School.

- D. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Per the U.S. EPA's NEPAassist, the project site is not listed as a hazardous materials site. The project will not create hazard to public or the environment.

- E. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is not within an Airport Land Use Plan area. The nearest, Du Bois Ranch Airport is approximately 2.1 miles west of the project site. Due to the distance and infrequent use, the airport poses no safety hazard for people working on the project site.

Per the Fresno County *Airport Land Use Compatibility* Plan Update adopted by the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) on December 3, 2018, the nearest public airport, Reedley Municipal Airport, is approximately 21 miles east of the project site.

- F. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is in an area where existing emergency response times for fire protection, emergency medical services, and sheriff protection meet adopted standards. The project does not include any characteristics (e.g., permanent road closures) that would physically impair or otherwise interfere with emergency response or evacuation in the project vicinity. These conditions preclude the possibility of the proposed project conflicting with an emergency response or evacuation plan. No impacts would occur.

- G. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Per Figure 9-9 of the Fresno County General Plan Background Report, the project site is not within a State Responsibility Area for wildland fire. The project will not expose persons or structures to wildland fire hazards.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

- A. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

According to the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), Central Valley Region the existing animal rendering facility is currently permitted under Waste Discharge Requirements Order R5-2014-0062, which authorizes a monthly average flow limitation of 192,000 gallons per day. According to the facility's 2019 4th Quarter Report, the facility's average monthly flow for December 2019 was 170,291 gallons per day. The proposed expansion would potentially not cause an exceedance of the flow limitation in Order R5-2014-0062, but the increase discharge could result in further groundwater degradation. The facility is currently under a Time Schedule Order (TSO R5-2014-0063) to come into compliance with salinity and nutrient requirements since the Plant's operation and discharge over the years has caused localized groundwater degradation for sodium, chloride, and bicarbonate, and pollution of groundwater with regards to electrical conductivity, total dissolved solids, and nitrate.

In response to the RWQCB's comments, the applicant's consultant provided additional information to the District. Per the information provided, over the first half of 2020, the facility has exhibited an average discharge of 170,000 gallons per day, which would allow for an additional 22,000 gallons per day to maintain compliance with the waste discharge requirement limit of 192,000 gallons per day. The fourth cooker (proposed) may add up to 22,000 gallons per day to maintain compliance with the permit limit and represents 11 percent of the total process water permit limit and approximately 0.01 percent of the total blended water (process water and irrigation water) applied per day. At a 0.01 percent increase in total flow and assuming a 0.01 percent increase in constituent concentrations, the 12-month rolling electrical conductivity concentration may increase from 1,848 $\mu\Omega/\text{cm}$ to 1,866 $\mu\Omega/\text{cm}$. Similarly, for nitrate as N, and assuming a 0.01 percent increase in constituent concentration, the 2020 average nitrate as N concentration would increase from 6.3 mg/L to 6.4 mg/L. As such, a proposed increase in flow of 22,000 gallons per day would have minimal impact on the constituent concentrations exhibited in the discharge.

RWQCB reviewed the information provided by the applicant and offered no additional comments relating to the project impact on groundwater quality as it relates to Time Schedule Order (TSO R5-2014-0063). However, RWQCB indicated that the existing animal rendering facility would be subject to Salt and Nitrate Control Programs. The

facility has already been provided with a “Nitrate Notice to Comply” Letter and will soon receive a “Salt Notice to Comply” Letter and will be required to choose how to proceed for both programs.

Additional comments provided by RWQCB indicate that a Report of Waste Discharge be provided if the project results in a material change in the character, location, or volume of discharge authorized in Waste Discharge Requirements Order R5-2014-0062. This requirement will be included as a Condition of Approval.

Comments provided by Fresno County Health Department, Environmental Health Division requires that for any underground storage tank found during construction would require Underground Storage Tank Removal Permit from the Health Department. This requirement will be included as a Project Note.

- B. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Per the Applicant’s Operational Statement, the existing animal rendering facility uses minimal water that is not produced through the rendering process. The facility currently uses an approximately 40,000 gallons of water per day from on-site wells. Based on maximum boiler capacity and expected actual production rates, additional water use resulting from the subject proposal is expected to be less than 8,000 gallons per day.

The project site is not located in a low-water area of Fresno County. A water supply evaluation for the project by the Water and Natural Resources Division of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning has determined that water supply is adequate to support the project.

The State Water Resources Control Board Division of Drinking Water (SWRCB-DDW) expressed no concerns with the project related to water quality. The existing facility currently operates under a public water system permit from SWRCB-DDW.

- C. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:
1. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site; or
 2. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or off site; or
 3. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or

4. Impede or redirect flood flows?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

According to the United States Geological Survey Quad Maps, no natural drainage channels run adjacent to or through the project site.

The project will not cause significant changes in the absorption rates, drainage patterns, or the rate and amount of surface runoff with adherence to the mandatory construction practices contained in the Grading and Drainage Sections of the County Ordinance Code. As noted above, an Engineered Grading and Drainage Plan may be required to show how additional storm water runoff generated by the proposed development will be handled without adversely impacting adjacent properties.

D. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Per Figure 9-7 of the Fresno County General Plan Background Report, the project site is not located in a 100-Year Flood Inundation Area and is not subject to flooding from the 100-year storm per the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) FIRM Panel 2075H.

E. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project is not in conflict with any water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. Per the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water there is no Water Quality Control Plan for Fresno County. The project is located within the McMullin Groundwater Sustainability Area (GSA). The reviewing agency expressed no concerns relating to impact on groundwater quality.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

A. Physically divide an established community?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project will not physically divide a community. The nearest city, City of Kerman, is approximately one mile east of the project site.

- B. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The subject property is designated as Agriculture in the Fresno County General Plan and is not located within the Sphere of Influence (SOI) of a city. As such, the subject proposal will not conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction other than Fresno County. The Fresno County General Plan allows the project by discretionary approval provided it meets applicable General Plan Policies.

The project meets General Plan Policy LU-A.3, criteria a – d & f. The project is expansion of an existing animal rendering facility which was allowed and expanded by Special Use Permit No. 280, Conditional Use Permit No. 567 and Conditional Use Permit No. 1459; is not located on productive agricultural land or in a water-short area and will use limited groundwater (less than 8,000 gallons per day); can be provided with adequate work force from the nearby City of Kerman, and Lanare and Riverdale communities. The project will utilize groundwater due to unavailability of community water system in the project area.

The project meets General Plan Policy LU-A.12, Policy LU-A.13 and Policy LU-A.14. The project is an allowed use on land designated for agriculture with discretionary approval, maintains adequate distance from surrounding farmlands, and requires no mitigation measures for the preservation of agricultural land.

The project meets General Plan Policy PF-C.17, Policy HS-B.1 Policy HS-F.1 and Policy HS-F.2. The project is not in a low water area and will rely on groundwater supply; will comply with fire protection measures for the minimization of fire hazards; and will handle hazardous materials and wastes according to State and local requirements.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- A. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state; or
- B. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local General Plan, Specific Plan or other land use plan?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Per Figure 7-8 of the Fresno County General Plan Background Report, the project site is not located within a mineral-producing area of the County. No impact would occur.

XIII. NOISE

Would the project result in:

- A. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies; or
- B. Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The Fresno County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division reviewed the proposal and expressed no concerns related to noise.

The project could result in an increase in noise level due to the construction noise. Noise impacts associated with construction are expected to be temporary and will be subject to the County Noise Ordinance.

- C. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

See discussion above in Section IX. E. The project will not be impacted by airport-related noise.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

- A. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure); or
- B. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project will not result in an increase of housing, nor will it otherwise induce population growth.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project:

- A. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically-altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically-altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:

1. Fire protection?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Per the North Central Fire Protection District (NCFPD), the project shall comply with California Code of Regulations Title 24 – Fire Code and California Code of Regulations Title 19 and prior to receiving NCFPD conditions of approval for the project, construction plans shall be submitted to and approved by the County. This requirement will be included as a Project Note.

2. Police protection; or

3. Schools; or

4. Parks; or

5. Other public facilities?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project will not result in the need for additional public services related to police protection, schools, or parks.

XVI. RECREATION

Would the project:

- A. Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; or
- B. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project will not induce population growth which may require new or expanded recreational facilities in the area.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:

- A. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The project will not conflict with any policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The project site is located one mile southwest of the City of Kerman along Jensen Avenue, which is designated as a rural expressway in the County General Plan. The project area is rural in nature and consist of agricultural fields. Per the Transportation and Circulation Element of the Fresno County General Plan no transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities are planned for the area.

According to the Applicant's Operational Statement, the current production levels could generate approximately 42 round-trip heavy-duty truck trips on a peak operating day. Based upon existing average production volumes, however, approximately 27 heavy duty truck trips are made to the facility daily. These trips include approximately 20 trucks that bring in raw material, and 7 trucks that remove finished commodities. If the annual production limits that are contained in the proposed SJVAPCD permits were to be achieved, average daily truck traffic would increase by approximately 10 vehicles. It is not likely, however, that permitted maximum annual throughput would ever be reached. Given expectations in average daily production, the expected increase in average daily truck traffic due to the project is 2 to 4 trucks.

The Design Division of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning identified no traffic impact related to the subject proposal and required no Traffic Impact Study.

The Road Maintenance and Operations Division of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning offered no comments due to the project generating a less than significant traffic.

- B. Be in conflict or be inconsistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project would add a cooker, condenser, and a hopper at an existing animal rendering facility. The project will not change the current number of employees working at the facility. As such, the distance travelled by workers to the facility will not change. This would result in no transportation impact from vehicle miles travelled by workers. The project is consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b).

- C. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project design would result in no changes to the existing roadway design within the project area, which were designed in accordance with Fresno County roadway standards to avoid roadway hazards and other traffic-related hazardous features.

A Project Note would require that an encroachment permit shall be obtained from Road Maintenance and Operations Division of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning for any work done within the County right-of-way to construct a new driveway or improve an existing driveway.

D. Result in inadequate emergency access?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site gains access off Jensen Avenue. The project will not change any emergency access to the site. Further review of emergency access will occur at the time the project is reviewed by the Fresno County Fire Protection District prior to the issuance of building permits.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- A. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:
1. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k); or
 2. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1? (In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.)?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is not located in an area designated as highly or moderately sensitive for archeological resources. Pursuant to AB (Assembly Bill) 52, the subject proposal was routed to the Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe, Picayune Rancheria of the Chukchansi Indians, Dumna Wo Wah Tribal Government, and Table Mountain Rancheria offering them an opportunity to consult under Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080.3(b) with a 30-day window to formally

respond to the County letter. No tribe requested consultation, resulting in no further action on the part of the County.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

- A. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

See discussion above in Section VII. E. GEOLOGY AND SOILS. The project will not result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities.

- B. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

See discussion in Section X. B. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY above.

- C. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

See discussion in Section VII. E. GEOLOGY AND SOILS above.

- D. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals; or
- E. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Any solid waste produce due to onsite office operation and other activities will continue going into a local land fill site through regular trash collection service. The impact would be less than significant.

XX. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

- A. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects; or
- B. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire; or
- C. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment; or
- D. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is not located within or near a State Responsibility Area for wildfire. See discussion in Section XV. A. 1. PUBLIC SERVICES above.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Would the project:

- A. Have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project will have no impact on biological or cultural resources. The project will not degrade the quality of the environment; reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species; cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels; threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community; or reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species.

- B. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable ("cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Each of the projects located within Fresno County has been or would be analyzed for potential impacts, and appropriate project-specific Mitigation Measures are developed to reduce that project's impacts to less than significant levels. Projects are required to comply with applicable County policies and ordinances. The incremental contribution by the proposed project to overall development in the area is less than significant.

The project will adhere to the permitting requirements and rules and regulations set forth by the Fresno County Grading and Drainage Ordinance, San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District, and California Code of Regulations Fire Code at the time development occurs on the property. No cumulatively considerable impacts relating to Agricultural and Forestry Resources or Air Quality were identified in the project analysis. Impacts identified for Aesthetics, Air Quality and Energy will be addressed with the Mitigation Measures discussed above in Section I. D., Section III and Section VI. A. B.

- C. Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings either directly or indirectly?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

No substantial impacts on human beings, either directly or indirectly, were identified in the analysis.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

Based upon Initial Study No. 7808 prepared for Conditional Use Permit Application No. 3670, staff has concluded that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment. It has been determined that there would be no impacts to agriculture and forestry resources, biological resources, cultural resources, mineral resources, population and housing, recreation tribal cultural resources and wildfire.

Potential impacts related to geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology & water quality, land use and planning, noise, public services, transportation, utilities and service systems, have been determined to be less than significant.

Potential impacts to aesthetics, air quality, and energy have been determined to be less than significant with the identified Mitigation Measures.

A Mitigated Negative Declaration is recommended and is subject to approval by the decision-making body. The Initial Study is available for review at 2220 Tulare Street, Suite A, street level, located on the southwest corner of Tulare and "M" Streets, Fresno, California.

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